
Response to Bomb Calls

416.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidelines to assist members of the Indio Police Department in their initial response to incidents involving explosives, explosive devices, explosion/ bombing incidents, suspicious packages or threats of such incidents. Under no circumstances should these general guidelines be interpreted as compromising the safety of first responders or the public. When confronted with an incident involving explosives, safety should always be the primary consideration.

416.2 POLICY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

It is the policy of the Indio Police Department to place a higher priority on the safety of persons and the public over damage or destruction to public or private property.

416.2(a) DEFINITIONS

1. Bomb / Explosive Device—Any chemical compound, mixture or device, the primary purpose of which is to function by explosion.
2. Bomb Threat—The expression of an intention to detonate an explosive device.
3. Triage Area - That area designated by first arriving emergency response units to an actual explosion site. This area is used by EMS personnel to assess patients and begin medical treatment on injuries sustained in the blast. The Triage Area should be in a safe location, at least 300 yard from the blast area, and if possible placing additional protection between the triage and the blast site.
4. Bomb Technician - Personnel trained in the recovery of, and disabling of explosive devices. Only certified personnel will remove any suspected explosive device.
5. Command Post - The fixed position where the Incident Commander and staff should be located for the duration of the event. This is the overall control point for the incident.
6. Frag (Fragmentation) - Any particle / item which is part of the device, and becomes a projectile (A.K.A. Shrapnel).
7. Ground Zero - Is the area where a bomb or explosive device has detonated. This is where the bomber placed the device.
8. Incident Commander - The first arriving supervisor to take charge of the incident. If it is a bomb threat or suspected bomb found the incident command will be the responsibility of the police department until the RSO Bomb Squad arrives and assumes command of the scene, at which point the initial supervisor and personnel will assist with any request of the RSO Incident Commander during the evolution of the incident. If a device has actually been detonated the fire department will take the lead.

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9. Public Information Officer - This person is responsible for designating a secure area for the media, directing the media to a safe control area, and maintaining and providing updated information to the media as the incident continues at the discretion of the Incident Commander.

416.3 RECEIPT OF BOMB THREAT

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

Department members receiving a bomb threat should obtain as much specific information from the individual as reasonably possible, including the type, placement and alleged detonation time of the device.

If the bomb threat is received on a recorded line, reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the recording is preserved in accordance with established department evidence procedures.

The member receiving the bomb threat should ensure that the Watch Commander is immediately advised and informed of the details. This will enable the Watch Commander to ensure that the appropriate personnel are dispatched, and, as appropriate, the threatened location is given an advance warning.

All calls received of a bomb threat, explosive, explosion, or incendiary device are assigned a "1st priority response" and a supervisor shall be dispatched to the location.

416.3.1 FIRST RESPONDING OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) Officers shall not operate their cell phone / radios within a 300 ft minimum radius as radio/cell phone frequencies may potentially detonate an explosive device.
- (b) Officers shall leave the decision to evacuate or not evacuate a scene to the person in control of the property, unless a potential explosive device is found.
- (c) Officers shall ask persons who locate a real or potential explosive device to remain at the scene to be interviewed by the RSO Bomb Squad.
- (d) Officers may contact the RSO bomb squad when any doubt exists as to whether they are dealing with an explosive device.
- (e) Only Riverside County Sheriff Department Bomb Squad personnel who are currently certified as Bomb Technicians shall handle explosive devices.
- (f) Officers shall notify the RSO bomb squad when an explosion has occurred that has resulted in any injury or damage.
- (g) Officers shall have CDF medics and firefighters stage at a safe location during the evolution of a bomb threat investigation.
- (h) The RSO bomb squad is responsible for moving explosive materials.
- (i) Exception: With the approval of a sergeant, officers may transport only the following materials to the evidence unit:
 - (a) Small arms ammunition smaller than .50 caliber
 - (b) Tear gas capsules that provide identification of their contents

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- (j) Officers shall notify RSO Bomb Squad if the evidence unit refuses these materials.
- (k) Officers shall stage CDF if appropriate.

416.3.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Dispatch Supervisor Duties;

- (a) Requests a phone call from the appropriate Sergeant.
- (b) Gives the sergeant information about the bomb threat.
- (c) Dispatches officers via the MDC.
- (d) Verifies that the sergeant is en route.

Sergeant Duties;

- (a) Inform the dispatch supervisor how many units to send to the scene.
- (b) Establish a command post.
- (c) Instruct all officers to check-in prior to entering the scene.
- (d) Contact the complainant or person who is in control of the property.
- (e) Assist with determining the credibility of the threat.
- (f) Determine how the threat was communicated.
- (g) Determine the exact words used in the threat, if possible.
- (h) Investigate the existence of any motives for the threat (DV issues, labor matters, disgruntled former employees, etc.).
- (i) Ascertain from the person-in-control whether the scene will be searched.
- (j) Determines the level of police involvement with the search, if any.
- (k) If a real or potential explosive device is located, notify RSO Bomb Squad immediately.
- (l) Evacuate the property, if it has not already been evacuated.
- (m) Establish a perimeter commensurate with the level of threat (see the ATF Vehicle Bomb Explosion Hazard and Evacuation Distance Tables).
- (n) Attempts to locate keys to all areas of the property.
- (o) Draws a sketch of the floor plan around the device, if possible.
- (p) Provides RSO with all available information.
- (q) Confirm that a report is written.

416.3.3 RESPONDING TO SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES (POTENTIAL CHEMICAL / BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS)

When investigating a potential chemical or biological weapon, responding officers shall:

- (a) Requests that a sergeant respond to the scene.
- (b) Requests that the Dispatch Supervisor notify RSO Bomb Squad and CDF Hazmat

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- (c) Uses personal protective equipment.
- (d) Identifies potential victims who were exposed to the package or suspected substance.
- (e) Assist RSO or CDF with their investigation as needed.
- (f) Request additional resources as needed.

This procedure shall be followed should a bomb threat occur at a private facility or another public facility and the Department is informed of the threat. The decision to allow personnel back into the public or private facility will be the responsibility of the person or persons in charge of the building when such facility is deemed safe to enter.

416.4 GOVERNMENT FACILITY OR PROPERTY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

A bomb threat targeting a government facility may require a different response based on the government agency. In case of a bomb threat at the Indio Superior Court which falls under the jurisdiction of the Riverside County Sheriff Department, the on duty supervisor will coordinate any assistance requested by RSO with the RSO Incident Commander to facilitate any mutual aid request other than the Departments jurisdictional control of the adjoining parking lots and any traffic control related issues that arise.

416.4.1 INDIO POLICE DEPARTMENT FACILITY

Best Practice

If the bomb threat is against the Indio Police Department facility, the Watch Commander will direct and assign officers as required for coordinating a general building search or evacuation of the police department, as he/she deems appropriate.

416.4.2 OTHER COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL FACILITY OR PROPERTY

Best Practice

If the bomb threat is against a county or municipal facility within the jurisdiction of the Indio Police Department that is not the property of this department, the appropriate agency will be promptly informed of the threat. Assistance to the other entity may be provided as the Watch Commander deems appropriate.

416.4.3 FEDERAL BUILDING OR PROPERTY

Best Practice

If the bomb threat is against a federal building or property, the Federal Protective Service should be immediately notified. The Federal Protective Service provides a uniformed law enforcement response for most facilities, which may include use of its Explosive Detector Dog teams.

If the bomb threat is against a federal government property where the Federal Protective Service is unable to provide a timely response, the appropriate facility's security or command staff should be notified.

Bomb threats against a military installation should be reported to the military police or other military security responsible for the installation.

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416.5 PRIVATE FACILITY OR PROPERTY

Best Practice **MODIFIED**

When a member of this department receives notification of a bomb threat at a location in the City of Indio, the member receiving the notification should obtain as much information as reasonably possible from the notifying individual, including:

- (a) The location of the facility.
- (b) The nature of the threat.
- (c) Whether the type and detonation time of the device is known.
- (d) Whether the facility is occupied and, if so, the number of occupants currently on-scene.
- (e) Whether the individual is requesting police assistance at the facility.
- (f) Whether there are any internal facility procedures regarding bomb threats in place, such as:
 1. No evacuation of personnel and no search for a device.
 2. Search for a device without evacuation of personnel.
 3. Evacuation of personnel without a search for a device.
 4. Evacuation of personnel and a search for a device.

The member receiving the bomb threat information should ensure that the Watch Commander is immediately notified so that he/she can communicate with the person in charge of the threatened facility.

416.5.1 ASSISTANCE

Best Practice

The Watch Commander should be notified when police assistance is requested. The Watch Commander will make the decision whether the Department will render assistance and at what level. Information and circumstances that indicate a reasonably apparent, imminent threat to the safety of either the facility or the public may require a more active approach, including police control over the facility.

Should the Watch Commander determine that the Department will assist or control such an incident, he/she will determine:

- (a) The appropriate level of assistance.
- (b) The plan for assistance.
- (c) Whether to evacuate and/or search the facility.
- (d) Whether to involve facility staff in the search or evacuation of the building.
 1. The person in charge of the facility should be made aware of the possibility of damage to the facility as a result of a search.
 2. The safety of all participants is the paramount concern.

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- (e) The need for additional resources, including:
 1. Notification and response, or standby notice, for fire and emergency medical services.

Even though a facility does not request police assistance to clear the interior of a building, based upon the circumstances and known threat, officers may be sent to the scene to evacuate other areas that could be affected by the type of threat, or for traffic and pedestrian control.

416.6 FOUND DEVICE

Best Practice

When handling an incident involving a suspected explosive device, the following guidelines, while not all inclusive, should be followed:

- (a) No known or suspected explosive item should be considered safe regardless of its size or apparent packaging.
- (b) The device should not be touched or moved except by the bomb squad or military explosive ordnance disposal team.
- (c) Personnel should not transmit on any equipment that is capable of producing radio frequency energy within the evacuation area around the suspected device. This includes the following:
 1. Two-way radios
 2. Cell phones
 3. Other personal communication devices
- (d) The appropriate bomb squad or military explosive ordnance disposal team should be summoned for assistance.
- (e) The largest perimeter reasonably possible should initially be established around the device based upon available personnel and the anticipated danger zone.
- (f) A safe access route should be provided for support personnel and equipment.
- (g) Search the area for secondary devices as appropriate and based upon available resources.
- (h) Consider evacuation of buildings and personnel near the device or inside the danger zone and the safest exit route.
- (i) Promptly relay available information to the Watch Commander including:
 1. The time of discovery.
 2. The exact location of the device.
 3. A full description of the device (e.g., size, shape, markings, construction).
 4. The anticipated danger zone and perimeter.
 5. The areas to be evacuated or cleared.

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416.7 EXPLOSION/BOMBING INCIDENTS

Best Practice

When an explosion has occurred, there are multitudes of considerations which may confront the responding officers. As in other catastrophic events, a rapid response may help to minimize injury to victims, minimize contamination of the scene by gathering crowds, or minimize any additional damage from fires or unstable structures.

416.7.1 CONSIDERATIONS

Best Practice

Officers responding to explosions, whether accidental or a criminal act, should consider the following actions:

- (a) Assess the scope of the incident, including the number of victims and extent of injuries.
- (b) Request additional personnel and resources, as appropriate.
- (c) Assist with first aid.
- (d) Identify and take appropriate precautions to mitigate scene hazards, such as collapsed structures, bloodborne pathogens and hazardous materials.
- (e) Assist with the safe evacuation of victims, if possible.
- (f) Establish an inner perimeter to include entry points and evacuation routes. Search for additional or secondary devices.
- (g) Preserve evidence.
- (h) Establish an outer perimeter and evacuate if necessary.
- (i) Identify witnesses.

416.7.2 NOTIFICATIONS

Best Practice

When an explosion has occurred, the following people should be notified as appropriate:

- Fire department
- Bomb squad
- Additional department personnel, such as investigators and forensic services
- Field supervisor
- Watch Commander
- Other law enforcement agencies, including local, state or federal agencies, such as the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)
- Other government agencies, as appropriate

416.7.3 CROWD CONTROL

Best Practice

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Only authorized members with a legitimate need should be permitted access to the scene. Spectators and other unauthorized individuals should be restricted to a safe distance as is reasonably practicable given the available resources and personnel.

416.7.4 PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

Best Practice

As in any other crime scene, steps should immediately be taken to preserve the scene. The Watch Commander should assign officers to protect the crime scene area, which could extend over a long distance. Consideration should be given to the fact that evidence may be imbedded in nearby structures or hanging in trees and bushes.